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THE EDGE

The Voice of Integrity
at Fort Hays State University

January 30, 2007; Volume 2, Issue 8 Hays, Kansas 67601

Gala 2007 set to begin Saturday night



Brandon Worf
Staff Writer

Everything but the kitchen sink. That's what you'll see at the Gala 2007, presented by the Fort Hays State Department of Music.

The Gala, in its second year, will feature even more performances than the first year.

As the brainchild of Terry Crull, director of choral activities, the Gala was entirely new to the department, but was

created as a means to address the issue of funding further scholarships for music students through the department itself.

"We were looking for ways to generate more funding for department scholarships in order to kind of give recruiting a boost, and this was one thing that we created. It gives us all a chance as a department to strut our stuff for everyone to see, and it allows us to benefit the students as well," Crull said.

Last year's inaugural performance of the Gala proved to be a success for the most part.

"We had to learn a lot from last year's experiences, especially in the planning

and logistics, since we're showcasing over 10 different ensembles back-to-back," Crull said. "With all the equipment and instruments that we have to move again, things can turn into a real traffic jam in a hurry."

This year, the bill is a little longer, with the addition of a few community groups who have ties to the department.

"We have a lot of community involvement in certain groups, such as Hays Symphony Orchestra and Hays Community Choir," Crull said.

**SEE 'GALA'
ON PAGE 11**



TYLER MESSENGER/THE EDGE
At far left, Laura Decker performs a scene during the Gala 2006. At left, a group performs a drum performance during Gala 2006.

Professor begins work on a free e-textbook

Zach Becker
Editor

Students might be able to scratch textbooks off their list of college expenses in the foreseeable future if one professor's ideas catch on.

This semester, Geology Professor Ron Schott is laying the foundation for a totally free, peer-edited electronic textbook in geology. The e-textbook is being created online using the same software that drives Wikipedia, a massive online free-content encyclopedia edited by volunteers.

As part of his Geomorphology class, and as an optional project in his Introduction to Geology class, Schott is giving his students the assignment of writing Wikipedia-style articles on a geology-related subject.

These basic articles will act as a framework for an eventual useful e-textbook, Schott hopes.

"(I'm) trying to use the Wiki

(collaborative website) to build up a reasonable amount of material ... copy it out of the Wiki and reformat that into a textbook," Schott said. He already has plans to pitch the e-textbook idea to other geologists and encourage them to contribute. He hopes that by getting it started with some basic information, it will make the project more appealing to expert volunteers.

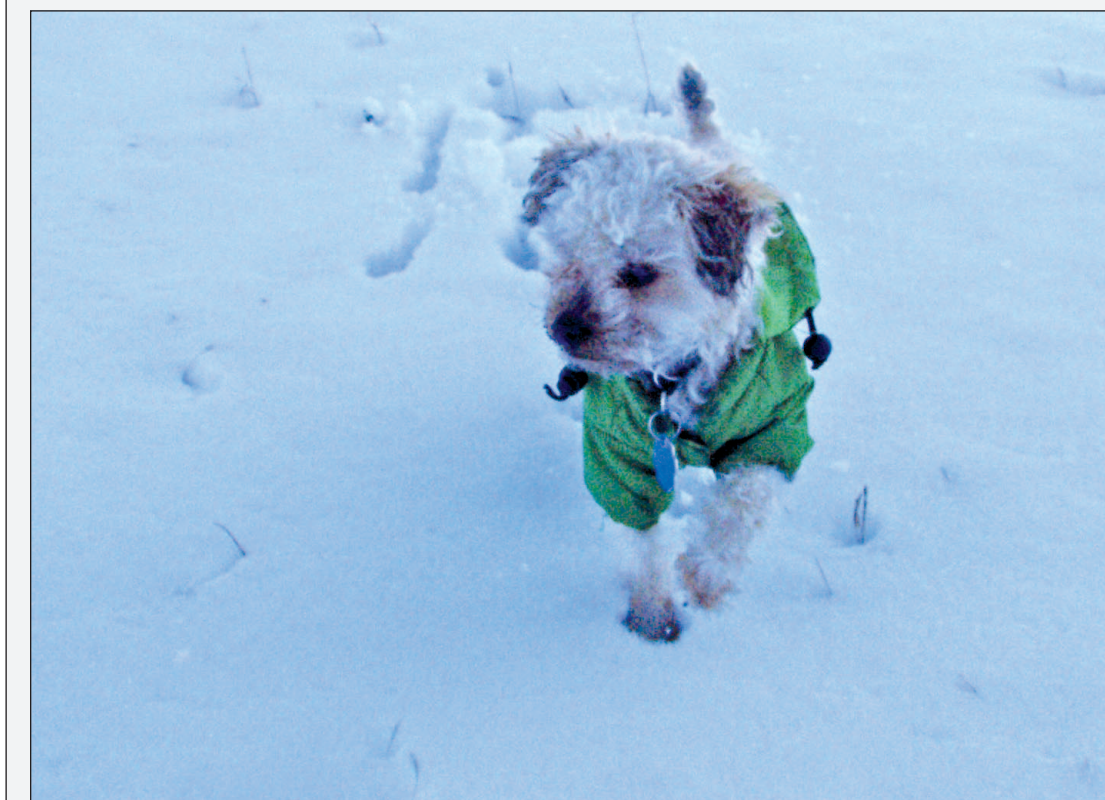
"The biggest thing right now is getting the content in," Schott said. "Once you get a core of information, you can build on it, you can edit it - you can do all sorts of stuff."

Peer Review

Unlike Wikipedia - which allows anonymous editing of articles - Schott is only allowing registered users to edit the articles for the e-textbook.

**SEE 'E-TEXT'
ON PAGE 11**

Snowy Day



ZACH BECKER/THE EDGE

Hays resident Mr. Spock, toy poodle, ventures out into the snow wearing a green coat after last week's snowstorm. Hays received several inches of snow.

EDITORIAL

E-textbooks perfect for Fort Hays State

Textbook prices are sky-high, controlled by an industry of greedy book publishers. But today's internet technology has the promise to make information truly free for all to use. Using the same software that has enabled Wikipedia to be so successful, e-textbooks (see page 1) could eliminate traditional textbook expenses for good and free up important financial resources for students all across the country. But someone has to take the lead in the battle to make information free, to rid college campus's of the greedy hand of book publishers. With mobile computing already on the slate for next year, Fort Hays is a perfectly suited to be on the cutting edge of this revolution. Plus, what better way to justify the purchase of a laptop computer than to eliminate the cost of textbooks? At least one professor on campus realizes this, as Ron Schott is already developing a free e-textbook on his own time with the help of his students. Now, Fort Hays needs to support his efforts and set up the technological framework so others can follow Schott's lead, even if they lack technical expertise. And they need to keep the information free and encourage other universities to follow their lead. With enough experts contributing from various campuses, very high quality e-textbooks could be possible. Once the e-textbook revolution has started, the only ones who stand to lose are the textbook publishers. And who is going to cry for them. But free e-textbooks aren't going to appear unless students demand it. Stand up and make Fort Hays hear your voice. -The Editorial Board

Icy campus roads pose danger to students

Is salt really that expensive? That's the only thing I can figure out after the university decided it better to let nature work its heating wonders rather than sprinkle a bit of salt on the icy campus roads last week. The frozen roads were not only dangerous for cars, but pedestrians crossing the street were also in danger of taking a nasty spill. While most of the ice was removed from the sidewalks, the roads around the college were just left with thick sheets of ice. I found just walking to my van in the parking lot be-

Letter to the Editor

FHSU's 'Second Life' encourages escapism, irresponsibility

Fort Hays State University continually strives to be on the forefront of technology in order to provide the best learning experience for its students. While these steps are commendable for the progress of the university, there is one aspect of technology that Fort Hays is currently exploring that—we feel—is a danger to its students, the future of the school, and the community as a whole. My wife and I are writing this out of concern for potential developments that seem to be alarming. As we speak, Fort Hays is exploring the opportunity of incorporating Second Life—an interactive virtual environment created by “residents”—into their academic strategies. It's possible that Fort Hays will purchase an island in Second Life to establish a college, complete with replicas of actual Fort Hays buildings. In order to participate, students are required to create an avatar (anything from a Star Wars Stormtrooper, a fireman, a rabbit, anything your alter ego desires). Second Life is the next step in virtual reality; it combines the lure of gaming, global interaction and entrepreneurship complete with an online economy and exchange of currency. Real estate transactions, clothing, even a developing stock exchange to provide funding for virtual building projects: Real money in a fake world. For many, the possibil-



Jeremy Scott Lovin Staff Writer

ity of a virtual world that mingles with reality seems to be exciting and advantageous. Yet, if we step back for a moment and watch the evolution of virtual reality and the effects it has on our generation, we will find that this takes us further into escapism. A world is being created that allows people to reinvent themselves however they see fit, complete with minimal accountability yet all the promise that their current lives lack. College, in our opinion, should create an environment that encourages the maturing and developing of our young people. It should be a place of equipping that gives individuals the capacity to impact the world around them in their respective fields. Sadly, we have seen college develop into a vacation that further removes students from the real world instead of preparing them for it. Our generation is one that has been fathered by escapism, via video games, the sports arena, pop culture, etc. We're increasingly becoming a society that ignores the arduous realities and responsibilities of life in favor of a life where we can abandon actuality. In our fathers' generation, when life's responsibilities became overwhelming, men (and women) headed to the local pub and had a beer with the buddies. However, our options today are considerably more perilous: we can get lost in a fantasy novel, or

My mother once fell in a restaurant that did not replace its worn-out traction stripping on the floor – a floor that was made of slippery marble tile. Their insurance barely covered the expensive medical bills and did not pay for any of the lost wages she incurred. Beyond that, it is hard to put a price tag on the pain and suffering she endured. Sure, the sun will eventually melt the ice, but if clearing the roads early prevents just one injury, it's worth it. Besides, it is better to be safe than sorry. And surely the price of salt can't be that high?

become our favorite video game character. Now, with the newest evolution of escape, we can create an entire virtual alternative life filled with virtual social interaction, virtual job opportunities—everything real life offers—albeit lacking the accountability of our true identity. Fort Hays needs to seriously consider the implications of exposing its students to a world that undermines the potential of these young minds. Do the benefits of Second Life outweigh the inherent dangers produced by this alter world? The abuse of Second Life is inevitable, yet to endorse it would be a mistake on the university's behalf. If we want the next generation to be capable of leading this world responsibly, then it's time we begin to pursue ventures that bring about maturity, integrity, and excellence. We have to demand from them today a true understanding of the responsibilities ahead, not offer them an escape. To further them into a vacation mentality is a huge injustice to the students that participate in Fort Hays State's programs. -Levi and Gennifer Marconette Levi is a mortgage lender with Acceptance Mortgage; he holds a BS Psychology from Fort Hays State, 2004. Gennifer is a freelance writer and editor for Aura Productions, LLC, a book publisher; she holds a MFA Poetry, BA English, and a secondary education teaching credential.

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THE EDGE www.theonlinedge.net

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E-text

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This, he hopes, will avoid the problem of article vandalism. Since the articles are contributed by students, though, Schott will be extra careful in editing for accuracy. “Obviously, I’m dealing with a lot of amateur geologists,” Schott said. “I’ll have to go in and check all the facts.” If the project gains momentum in the geologic community, a form of peer-review- a vital function in the publishing process- will naturally be in place via the Wiki model. “It’s not peer-reviewed in the traditional sense of sending it off to a journal and getting it published by a big publishing house,” Schott said. “It is the result of a collaboration by people who are expert at least teachers – who know the subject material. “In no way do I want to short-circuit that peer review process. Ultimately, I would want to get this thing reviewed by as many people as possible. The great thing about the Wiki process is that your reviewers can go in and make edits and improve the product overall. It’s meant to be a self-correcting medium.” After assembling the information in a Wiki form, the articles would then need to be organized and edited into a usable e-textbook for classroom use. Schott envisions a new, concrete version of the e-text being released every semester or year. This way, the information available in the e-text does not change during the course of a class. Blazing the Trail Schott is working on the e-textbook project during his free time and hosting the database on his computer. “Right now, this is entirely on my



ZACH BECKER/THE EDGE Geology professor Ron Schott sits in his office in Tomanek Hall. Schott is developing a freely distributed electronic textbook using student contributions from his classes.

own,” Schott said. “I’ve hatched this one on my own and on my own time. At this point I haven’t approached anybody about getting university support for this. Part of that is just because I can do it, and I’m motivated to do it, and I don’t need their help at this point. This also gives me a lot more control.” Motivations Schott sees his e-textbook as an experiment, one in which his motivation is not monetary but rather a fascination with the Wiki technology and a desire to make his field more accessible. “Certainly one of my motivations for doing this was that this would be a free resource,” Schott said. “This is not envisioned to be anything that cost anybody any money and (it could be) potentially a very valuable way to make use of this laptop university model.”

Mobile Computing With the transition to the mobile computing environment set to start in the Fall 2007 semester, Schott thinks now would a great time for Fort Hays to step out as a pioneer in e-textbooks. “I would love to see a dozen disciplines across campus all going off and doing this,” he said. “I think we could really make a case for us using all the mobile computing power we’re going to have. This would be a great value-added thing. The barrier is getting people motivated and giving them a reason to do it.” Obstacles Obviously, free, quality e-textbooks would be a great value to students, but the main problem Schott sees is motivating professors to create these texts without the “dangling

carrot” of a financial reward in the form of royalties. This is where the university would step in, according to Schott. Professors would need a “clear signal that I would get tenure credit for (contributing to an e-textbook), or promotion credit - if there was a clear indication that this would help me with my own job and my own promotion,” Schott said. If Fort Hays pushed the e-textbook idea hard, providing incentives, and perhaps partnered with other universities, reliable e-textbooks could theoretically be produced fairly quickly, Schott said, especially given that the Wikimedia software is a free download. “There is a lot more value here than the cost, which is why I’ve been able to do this on my own computer on my own time,” he said. “It doesn’t take a lot to maintain this.”

Booting Up Although Schott is unaware of any established free e-textbooks in geology, the Wikibooks project, run by the same foundation that runs Wikipedia, already offers online textbooks in many different academic fields. These could be built upon and customized by Fort Hays’ students and faculty. “Maybe there is either a partial book you could contribute to or even a complete book you could add on to or fork your own version of,” Schott said. “No sense in reinventing the wheel. Build on it if it’s there. I don’t see any reason you couldn’t do it in any class.” The Future While Schott’s e-textbook is still a work in its infancy - at the very least a year from being a usable book - the idea of free online textbooks is one of great potential. “At Fort Hays, if we grabbed onto this idea right now we could be at the front of the pack,” Schott said. “Once you get a great free text out there, what’s to prevent people from making this the standard?” Schott is willing to help other professors with the technical aspects of establishing an e-textbook. He’s also willing to open up his geology e-textbook to anyone interested in contributing. Schott can be contact at rschott@fhsu.edu. “The more educated people we’ve got, the better off we are,” Schott said on the idea of free e-textbooks. “You’ll reap collateral rewards from that without having to reap monetary rewards.”

Gala

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We decided to allow them the opportunity to shine as well and it gives everyone attending a little more bang for their buck.” This year’s central theme deals with music from around the world, including some traditional and modern music compositions from Japan and China. “We’re having everything from ragtime to modern Chinese symphonic music. It provides a bit of contrast this year against last year’s patriotic theme,” Crull said. Some of the groups performing this year include the Concert Choir, Fort Hays Singers, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Winds, Percussion Ensemble, and Jazz Ensemble 1. “Jazz 1 has a really kickin’ number going that should get the crowd pumped up in the second half,” Crull said. With all it has to offer, Gala 2007 promises to deliver quality entertainment, according to Crull.. The Gala 2007 begins runs from 7:30 – 9 p.m. Saturday, February 3 at Beach-Schmidt. Admission is \$10. For further information, visit www.fhsu.edu/music or contact Tricia Lynch at 628-4533.

University receives grant for computers in Alumni & Endowment Center

When Fort Hays State University’s new W.R. and Yvonne Robbins Alumni & Endowment Center opens this fall, it will be fully equipped with computer hardware and software to expand the Endowment Association’s telemarketing efforts. David Kerr, president of AT&T Kansas, presented a \$49,160 grant to the university on Saturday morning that will provide for the purchase of the computer hardware and software. “The Alumni & Endowment Center will take the university to a new level of excellence, and AT&T is pleased to be a part of this effort,” Kerr said. The check presentation was part of the Hays Area Chamber of Commerce’s Eggs & Issues program. Edward H. Hammond, Fort Hays president, accepted the grant from Kerr on behalf of the AT&T Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of the AT&T Inc. Since 1996, AT&T Inc. and the AT&T Foundation have contributed more than \$439 million to non-profit organizations across the country. With its strong giving record, the AT&T Foundation is among the five largest corporate foundations in the United States and was ranked by Forbes magazine among the most generous corporate foundations in 2006. “AT&T has been a tremendous supporter of the university,” President Hammond said, “and this gift will contribute significantly to our ability to meet the higher education needs of the citizens of Kansas.” The mission of the Endowment Association is to support and advance the university by seeking gifts and bequests, and then administering those contributions in a prudent manner and in accordance with the donors’ wishes.

▼ Tax Season
Accounting Club to offer free help with taxes

The Fort Hays State University Accounting Club is offering free income tax preparation for the 2007 tax season.

The Fort Hays students are qualified to prepare 1040EZ, 1040A and 1040 forms as well as itemized deductions, interest and dividends through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Low to moderate income (\$35,000 and below) people are eligible to receive assistance from these qualified Fort Hays students.

No appointments are needed. The program operates on a first-come, first-served basis.

“We are really excited,” said Alicia Tubbs, president of the Accounting Club. “This is our chance to give back to the community, and the more people who know about this, the more people can benefit.”

Charles Gnizak, assistant professor of accounting and information systems and Accounting Club sponsor, said this is his sixth year supervising the program, but he believes it has been active for at least 10 years.

“The area we usually serve is Ellis County,” said Gnizak. “However, there are no restrictions on the area, and once in a while we will have people coming from outside of Ellis County for help will their taxes.”

Gnizak said the Accounting Club usually serves from 220 to 250 people each year.

Participants must bring photo Identification; Social Security cards for themselves, their spouses and any dependents; a current year’s tax package if they received one; wage and earning statements from all employers and bank.

They must also bring any other relevant information about in-

come and expenses that could be needed in the tax preparation.

Bank routing numbers and account numbers should be brought for direct deposit.

To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign required forms.

Services will be available on: Tuesdays from 5 to 8 p.m. - Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27; March 6, 13, 27 and April 3. Thursdays from 5 to 8 p.m. - Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 and March 1. Saturdays from 9 to 11:30 a.m. -- Feb. 24 and March 31.

No service is available after April 3.

Tax returns will be prepared on campus in McCartney Hall, room 116.

For more information, contact the Accounting and Information Systems Department at 785-628-4121 or Gnizak at 785-628-4328.

▼ THE EDGE
Free Classifieds

For Rent

1 Bedroom Basement. No Pets. Available Now. (785) 625-2295.

1 Bedroom, unfurnished. All bills paid. \$365. (785) 628-6898, call after 6.

1 Bedroom Studio with kitchen. All bills paid. No pets. Refurbished units. Free W/D, security fence/ gates. (785) 259-1507.

Attic Apartment, available now, \$290 all bills paid. 310 W. 6th. (785) 623-3768.

2 Bedroom Duplex with garage. Available February 1st. No pets. (785) 628-9612.

2 Bedroom Basement. Two blocks from campus. Utilities paid. (620) 617-1770.

2 Bedroom, 2 bath. Recently renovated. \$450/mo. All bills paid. No pets. Available immediately. (785) 628-2877.

2 Bedroom, fireplace. No smoking/pets. 1 year lease. 2727B Colonial. (785) 623-1946.

2 Bedroom Duplex, \$475 plus bills. W/D hookup. No pets. (785) 623-4010.

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House for Sale, 304 E. 16th. \$45K. msk6793@gmail.com.

Free personals, help wanted and non-commercial classified ads.

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Limit entries to 25 words.

Next issue: Feb. 13

The Edge reserves the right to edit or refuse any classified advertising.

▼ State of the Union
Bush's actions just plain jingoistic

By a show of hands, how many of you actually watched the State of the Union address last week? Okay, not many, and between us, neither did I, although I did settle for the published transcripts of the same euphemisms and rhetoric we seem to keep hearing.

While I was reading through the whole thing, one word came to mind more than any other: “jingoistic.”

Maybe I’m just hearing this after seeing what we’ve been through over the last five years overall and not just recently.

Dictionary.com lists the word “jingoistic” as, “Extreme nationalism characterized especially by a belligerent foreign policy; chauvinistic patriotism.” Perhaps that’s why it came to mind.

Despite losing his party majority in Congress this past election year, President Bush is still pushing that same mentality he’s shown us ever since his inauguration in 2001.

“You’re either with us, or against us.” How much more jingoistic can somebody get?

To directly quote G-Dub in his speech last week, he says, “Our citizens don’t much care which side of the aisle we sit on -- as long as we are willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done.”

So who has to do the aisle crossing here? Regardless of the fact that he addressed a Democratic majority that was elected in an overwhelming turn of the tide, he still managed to remain as defiant as ever.

Stay the course, no matter the cost. Short of being belligerent, I’d call that pretty chauvinistic in and of itself.

While Bush did get one thing right—we don’t care which side of the politics you’re on, we just don’t want the politicking at all. Nor the massive debt, the corporate greed, the unjust wars, the attacks on civil liberties and the unfathomable stockpiles of disinformation for just about every-



Brandon Worf
Staff Writer

rything else. We hear you, Mr. Bush, but we hardly believe it.

Time Magazine recently put, “Only 648 days until the election!” on the front cover of its latest issue and is calling this next presidential election, “the most wide-open race since 1928.” Surprise; the American public isn’t the massive horde of mindless drones it once was, at least I hope so; the new shows on MTV don’t exactly support that hypothesis. And neither does the ignorance we keep seeing from the White House.

If anyone has been the personification of jingoism, it’s been Bush and his cronies in the GOP. The most recent example


came when Bush signed a bill in a private ceremony at the White House that effectively gives him the “authority” to overstep states in activating the National Guard when effectively necessary to do so (e.g. national disasters, riots, etc.), a responsibility normally given to state governors only. However, the bill revises the Posse Comitatus Act, which effectively keeps the military from acting as law enforcement within our own country and in doing so, gives Bush the ability to call up National Guard troops on a whim. It seems a little chauvinistic if you ask me, especially when almost every governor in the country completely disagreed with the legislation, namely Louisiana gubernator Kathleen Blanco, who was openly bypassed by the feds in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, despite her insistences that the militia presence wasn’t necessary.

However, we can’t forget about the war on terror: Afghanistan, Iraq, the PATRIOT Act, not to mention the bullying of most of the globe into “cooperating” with these ridiculous excuses for security threats. Remember our quarrels with France and Germany? Freedom Fries had to be the most shallow and isolationist thing to come from some Americans’ ignorance in a long time.

Most US citizens were big on the flag-waving hysteria immediately after 9/11 occurred. As time has passed, it has dwindled quite a bit, down mostly to just the dedicated hardliners who refuse to believe their president and his administration is a bunch of two-faced liars who use “patriotism” as leverage to force others into a point of view they wouldn’t normally accept otherwise.

If this country is based on democratic ideology, then it’s high time that we were patriotic and did our democratic duties and realized we’re falling for a jingoistic fraud. Chauvinistic? It’s doubtful, since most tend to like thinking for themselves.

Every decision has consequences



Mike Courson
Staff Writer

Earlier this month, 19-year old Jodi Sanderholm went missing in Arkansas City. Four days later, investigators found the body of the Cowley County Community College dance team member in a wooded area near Cowley State Fishing Lake.

The above case is tragic for too many reasons to count. Sanderholm had been the valedictorian of her high school. She taught dance to children. She had plans to be a pharmacist.

All of those plans were dashed because one selfish person decided that her entire life—all the memories she’d made and been apart of, all her current relationships, and all the things she could have done and enjoyed in the future—was worth a few minutes of his own satisfaction. Such a loss and waste of life is incomprehensible.

Cases like this are the ultimate example of bad decision-making. As irrational as that decision is to most of us, this young man thought he had it figured out. He took Jodi into the woods. He drove her car into the lake. He tried to hide the things that might get him into trouble. Fortunately,

he failed and was caught before he could harm anyone else. But not before he ruined and changed the lives of many, including his own.

While the decision to murder is a fairly infrequent choice, what about more common decisions? College students find themselves in situations that could turn into something bad and life-changing all the time. Though they may never wish to harm someone with their decision, sometimes things go wrong.

In November 2003, four Fort Hays football players got in an altercation that left 18 year-old student Clint Johnson dead.

I would never pretend to know what those football players were thinking that night, but did they think their actions would end the life of a person and result in prison time? I would argue that Clint Johnson would still be alive today if they had.

How many students drink alcohol on the weekend? In Hays alone, it’s a significant number of kids. How many of those kids then decide that they can drive home? More than 12,000 Americans were killed in accidents involving legally drunk drivers in 2005.

How many of those drivers got behind the wheel thinking they would kill someone?

Alcohol can also be an accessory in other crimes. It’s no secret that alcohol effects the decision making process. What happens when an honor student goes out to the bar, gets drunk, and then leaves with a stranger? Any number of things can happen: pregnancy, STDs, loss of character or reputation, even rape and murder.

Did she think her life would change when she made the decision to have a little fun?

No one wants to live in a closet just because it’s safe there. Sure, you may live to be 100, but did you really live? On the other hand, is one night of fun worth an entire future? There must be a balance between living to the fullest and good decision-making, and it’s not that hard to do. There are safeguards for most of our everyday behaviors. A single punch can lead to death. Why chance it fighting over something stupid? Driving drunk can be deadly. Why do it when there are so many alternatives? Going home with a stranger is dangerous. If he’s good enough, can’t he wait until you are sober?

Part of me feels like we must live our lives as best we can to honor victims like Jodi Sanderholm and Clint Johnson, who will never get to hear their favorite songs, eat their favorite foods, or see their friends and family again. We have the ability to do the things we enjoy, and we should. But no one is exempt from the consequences of a single bad decision. You can build the greatest life imaginable and then ruin it with one decision. Or worse yet, ruin the life of someone else.

Final Fantasy XII well worth purchase price

Final Fantasy 12 is a superbly refined game from Square-Enix that is sure to provide hours upon hours of fun for fans of the genre.

The game uses the Active Dimension Battle system (ABS). This is the system that massively mul-

tiplayer online role playing games (mmorpgs) use where the battles take place in the actual game world. This allows players to avoid enemies because they can be seen on the map. In addition, enemies and players alike can move freely

through battle and even run away from battle.

Another new feature is the battle chain. Each enemy drops a random combination of items based on a rarity chart. A chain begins when an enemy is killed and continues to grow until an enemy of a different classification is killed, the characters touch a save crystal or when the characters enter a town. The battle chain has four levels, and as it grows the frequency of rare items dropped increases.

Because controlling multiple characters at the same time in a battle can be hard, a gambit system was implemented. Gambits tell the characters how to act in a certain situation. An

example is Ally HP<50% (target and condition) Cure (action). This states that when an ally's health drops below 50% that character will cast cure on them. The other target categories are self and foe.

Most of the gil, the games currency, acquired varies from other games systems because rather than receiving large amounts of gil at the end of a battle, loot is dropped far more often. Loot items have no purpose other than to be sold for gil. In addition, different loot combinations will open cheap items or items packs that can be bought through a bazaar, which is available at all merchants.

Rather than specializing in a certain class a licensing

board is given. The board is the same for everyone. Allowing every character to eventually be the ultimate warrior. The board is separated into two halves. The top half contains all the magic, skills, additional attributes and accessories. The bottom half contains all the weapons and armors.

The licensing board contains special "skills" called quickenings. Quickenings are extremely powerful, combo attacks that all active characters may participate in.

Each character may only unlock three quickenings, but each time they unlock one they gain a mist charge which doubles their max magic points.

Although there are no

summoner skills, there are espers. Espers are beings created by the gods. The espers became arrogant and challenged the gods. When the gods won they cursed the espers to become the companions of any human who defeats them. When an esper is beaten a space opens up on the licensing board for any one to take. The catch is only one person can control an esper. When summoned an esper takes the place of two characters and acts on his own gambit system.

Overall, the game is extremely deep and most of all, it is just plain fun. Final Fantasy XII won't disappoint. Playstation 2 owners should pick up this game post-haste.

Final Fantasy XII

Reviewer:

Jon Demal

Format:

PS2

Genre:

mmorpg

Comment:

Once again, the team at Square-Enix has developed a masterpiece.

Final Rating:

10/10



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FEATURES

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Anime Association provides fun for members

Mike Courson
Staff Writer

"It's not every day that you get to see a 21 year-old guy with shaved legs in heels and a mini skirt," laughed Crystal Nash, president of the Fort Hays Anime Association.

Students saw just that during the club's recruiting period, though, when Anime Association Vice President Chris Morlang dressed up as a character from Sailor Moon, a Japanese cartoon about young girls with magical powers who work to save the universe.

Dressing up and parading around campus as an anime character may seem like a bizarre way to recruit members into a club, but it must be working. Just two years after its founding, the now-official Fort Hays Anime Association has about 20 members and growing. The group meets about twice a week to watch anime and discuss Japanese culture.

Recruiting days are a fun time for members, who dress up and talk to students and professors about the club and its activities.

"We usually get a lot of comments and questions, and make a lot of people smile," Nash said.

The club was founded two years ago by Morlang and Ashley Maddern. The two felt there was enough interest in Japanese animation to form an anime club.

"I went to community college in Garden City and they had an anime club," Morland said, who worked for over a year to make the club official. "I came up here and thought since they were an actual university, they would have an anime club, but they didn't."

Part of making the club official meant drafting a constitution and by-laws. Morlang wanted former students to be able to participate in the club and drafted the rules to allow this.

"The overall goal of the anime club is to get other students interested in the Japanese culture through the use of Japanese animation-- otherwise known as anime--games, and food," Nash said.

Club members keep busy on and off campus, helping out with projects like the Campus Cleanup. They also volunteer at the residence halls at Halloween and take children trick-or-treating.

Members also attend anime conventions where they can speak with others who are interested in anime and

Japanese culture. Members have traveled to Wichita and Denver for these conventions.

Members are now preparing for Naka-Kon, an anime convention put on by the University of Kansas chapter in Kansas City. The convention, in its third year, will feature everything from crafts and karaoke to memorabilia and an artist alley, where students can buy art.

The Anime Association is also planning a Dance Dance Revolution tournament in April to raise money for the club, according to Nash.

The anime club is open to all Fort Hays students and joining is easy. Unlike many clubs on campus, the anime club has no membership dues. A person can just show up to the club meetings. They are held at 9 p.m. every Tuesday and every Saturday at noon, both at Chuck's Place in Wiest Hall. The meetings usually last a couple of hours.

Maddern, who graduated since founding the club, still communicates regularly with members.

"The best part was just hanging out with a group of people with the same interest and being able to talk about anime without having to explain what it is," she said.



ABOVE, Fort Hays Anime Association alumni Ashley Maddern and members Chris Morlang and Crystal Nash take a picture at Anime Festival Wichita. At left, Kimberly Conner poses with Fort Hays President Ed Hammond on Halloween. Below, Nash and Morlang (dressed as a female character) stand next to professor and Anime Association sponsor Stephen Schleicher on one of the group's recruiting days.

